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ABSTRACT

A four-variable equation to predict administrative effectiveness of academic deans was derived from 17 variables by discriminant analysis. The study objective was to validate four indicators of administrator effectiveness. If the four variables were found to discriminate between effective and ineffective deans, search-screening committees could give special attention to these indicators as they interview candidates for a leadership position. Two groups consisting of presidents and vice-presidents for academic affairs from universities rated "poor" and "outstanding" academic deans on their campus on the following variables: intellectual efficiency, flexibility, knowledge about position, and judgment. An administrative effectiveness score was developed using the discriminate weights of the four variables. The average administrative effectiveness score for the poor deans was minus .96, and 53 percent were perfectly classified. The average administrative effectiveness score for the outstanding deans was .68, and 33 percent were perfectly classified. The outcome was an administrative effectiveness continuum of discriminate function weights bounded by plus or minus .94. It is suggested that search committees can use the four variables in interviews with candidates for dean positions. (Author/SW)

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Four Indicators of Administrative Effectiveness

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Selecting a new dean who will meet the expectations of both the faculty and central administration is a long, frustrating and anxious process for all involved. The frustration is expressed in a recent study quoted by Lutz (1979) which found only slightly more than half of the deans selected indicated they would accept the position again if given the choice. Nearly the same percentage of search-screening committee members said they would not select the same person as dean if they had the opportunity to choose again. Those unhappy comments indicate the criteria for selecting deans, the interview process, the needs of the institution, and the qualifications of candidates need to be more closely examined and improved. This study was conducted to validate four indicators of administrative effectiveness. If the four variables were found to discriminate between effective and ineffective deans, then search-screening committees could give special attention to these indicators as they interview candidates for a leadership position.

Previous studies by Skipper (1976, 1977) have shown how effective and ineffective university administrators at the dean level and above differ on ten personal characteristics and seven administrative skills. Skipper and Hofmann (1979) reduced these seventeen variables to four through discriminate analysis (Tatsuoka, 1971) and maintained the predictive ability at one hundred percent. They found two personal characteristics, Intellectual Efficiency and Flexibility, and two administrative skills, Knowledge of Position and Judgment, were as effective as the

seventeen variables in differentiating effective from ineffective leaders. They assumed that the discriminate function defines an effectiveness continuum with effective administrators at the extreme positive end and ineffective administrators at the negative end. Using scores of the discriminate functions for each variable, it was then possible to establish an equation for predicting a leader's location on the continuum. The equation is: Administrative Effectiveness = (.20 Intellectual Efficiency) - (.14 Flexibility) + (.16 Knowledge of Position) + (.14 Judgment) - 2.07. They found the A.E. index, which is the average discriminate function score for each group, to be +.94 for effective leaders and -.94 for ineffective leaders. In their research, a dean rated high in Intellectual Efficiency was described as alert, well-informed, efficient and clear in thinking while a dean rated low was described as stereotyped in thinking, shallow, and defensive. A high rating in Flexibility indicated a dean who was insightful, assertive and confident while a low rating indicated a person that was rigid, guarded, and worried. A dean who received a high rating on Knowledge of Position understood all facets of the job of a dean, including the power and limitations, while a dean with a lower rating lacked fundamental knowledge about the routine nature of the position. A high rating in Judgment indicated the ability to make correct decisions in complex situations while a low rating indicated decisions were often considered unsound.

To determine the ability of the four variables to discriminate between effective and ineffective deans a sample of thirty-six

university presidents and provosts who were former American Council on Education Fellows were asked to rate either a "poor" or "outstanding" academic dean compared to the other academic deans on campus according to the following definition of leadership (Stogdill, 1973):

> Leaders are persuasive; they articulate goals and open channels of communication; they have influence with their superiors; they develop well defined patterns of organization and reduce conflicting demands; they hold the leadership role; they can easily deal with uncertainty and are considerate of their followers' welfare.

The raters were randomly assigned to two equal groups of eighteen. One group selected and rated an "outstanding" dean on their campus while the other group selected and rated a "poor" dean on their campus. The universities these presidents and vice presidents serve were both public and private, urban and rural and are located in 29 different states: three in the North, 11 in the South, 5 in the East, 11 in the West, and 6 in the Midwest.

Ninety-two percent of the sample responded. All eighteen of the raters of "outstanding" deans responded while fifteen of the raters of "poor" deans responded.

Results

By placing the mean rating for each of the four indicators into separate equations for the poor and outstanding deans, it is

possible to compute an Administrative Effectiveness index for each group of deans. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviation for each group.

The Administrative Effectiveness Index equation for the poor deans is:

AE = (.20 x 2.60) - (.14 x 2.33) + (.16 x 2.00) + (.41 x 1.46) - 2.07.

The Administrative Effectiveness index is -.96 which is below the average discriminate weight score of -.94 and indicates the equation identifies the group as poor deans. In fact all of the poor deans had negative A.E. scores ranging from .35 to -1.44. Eight (fifty-three percent) were below the critical score of -.94.

For the outstanding deans the A.E. equation is:

AE = (.20 x 6.11) - (.14 x 6.38) + (.16 x 4.00) + (.41 x 4.33) - 2.07.

The A.E. score is .68 for the outstanding deans and does not meet the critical score of .94 as predicted. Although the critical score was not met, seventeen of the eighteen outstanding deans received positive scores ranging from .27 to 1.20 and six (thirty-three percent) had A.E. scores above .94.

From these results we can conclude that the Administrative Effectiveness index is very accurate in identifying ineffective deans but is not as accurate as the index predicted for identifying outstanding deans. All of the ratings of the poor deans were negative and all of their A.E. scores were also negative while all of the outstanding deans but one received positive ratings and all but one A.E. index was positive.

The application of these findings to the work of the search-screening committee will be of greatest value during interviews

with candidates. By focusing close attention on the candidates' Intellectual Efficiency, Flexibility, Knowledge of Position, and Judgment, the committee can rule out for further consideration those Dean candidates rated low on the four characteristics and spend more time and effort evaluating those candidates not rated low. Although the A.E. index offers some assistance in identifying the potentially ineffective dean, it is less helpful when trying to identify the potentially outstanding dean. It seems reasonable to explain outstanding deans as leaders with specific personal qualities and strong administrative skills that satisfy unique needs of a particular faculty and institution at a specific time in the life of the institution.

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Outstanding and Poor Deans

Variables	Outstanding		Poor	
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.
Intellectual Efficiency	6.11	.47	2.60	1.35
Flexibility	6.38	.50	2.33	.72
Knowledge About Position	4.00	.68	2.00	.92
Judgement	4.33	.68	1.46	.63